

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER XXIV. ON HALF RATIONS.

CAPTAIN WINSTANLEY entered upon his new position with a fixed determination to make the best of it, and with a very clear view of its advantages and disadvantages. For seven years he was to be master of everything—or his wife was to be mistress, which, in his mind, was exactly the same. No one could question his use of the entire income arising from Squire Tempest's estates during that period. When Violet came of age—on her twenty-fifth birthday—the estates were to be passed over to her in toto; but there was not a word in the squire's will as to the income arising during her minority. Nor had the squire made any provision in the event of his daughter's marriage. If Violet were to marry to-morrow, she would go to her husband penniless. He would not touch a sixpence of her fortune till she was twenty-five. If she were to die during her minority the estate would revert to her mother.

It was a very nice estate, taken as a sample of a country squire's possessions. Besides the New Forest property, there were farms in Wiltshire and Dorsetshire; the whole yielding an income of between five and six thousand a year. With such a revenue, and the Abbey House and all its belongings rent-free, Captain Winstanley felt himself in a land of Canaan. But then there was the edict that seven years hence he was to go forth from this land of milk and honey, or, at any rate, was to find himself living at the Abbey House

on a sorely restricted income. Fifteen hundred a year in such a house would mean genteel beggary, he told himself despondently. And even this genteel beggary would be contingent on his wife's life. Her death would rob him of everything.

He had a mind given to calculation, and he entered upon the closest calculations as to his future. He meant to enjoy life, of course. He had always done that to the best of his ability. But he saw that the chief duty he owed to himself was to save money; to lay by against the evil inevitable day when Violet Tempest would despoil him of power and wealth. The only way to do this was by the cutting down of present expenses, and an immediate narrowing of the lines on which the Abbey House was being conducted; for the captain had discovered that his wife, who was the most careless and incompetent of women as regards money matters, had been spending the whole of her income since her husband's death. If she had not spent her money on society, she had spent it on travelling, on lace, on old china, on dress, on hot-house flowers; on a stable which was three times larger than she could possibly require; on a household in which there were a good many more cats than were wanted to catch mice; on bounties and charities that were given upon no principle, not even from inclination, but only because Squire Tempest's widow had never been able to say no.

Captain Winstanley's first retrenchment had been the sale of Bullfinch, for which noble animal Lord Mallow, a young Irish viscount, had given a cheque for three hundred guineas. This money the captain put on deposit at his bankers, by way of a

nest-egg. He meant it to grow into something worth investing before those seven fat years were half gone.

He told his wife his views on the financial question one morning when they were breakfasting tête-à-tête in the library, where the squire and his family had always dined when there was no company. Captain and Mrs. Winstanley generally had the privilege of breakfasting alone, as Violet was up and away before her mother appeared. The captain also was an early riser, and had done half his day's work before he sat down to the luxurious ten o'clock breakfast with his wife.

"I have been thinking of your ponies, pet," he said, in a pleasant voice, half careless, half caressing, as he helped himself to a salmon cutlet. "Don't you think it would be a very wise thing to get rid of them?"

"Oh, Conrad!" cried his wife, letting the water from the urn overflow the teapot in her astonishment; "you can't mean that! Part with my ponies?"

"My dear love, how often do you drive them in a twelvemonth?"

"Not very often, perhaps. I have felt rather nervous driving lately—carts and great waggon-loads of hay come out upon one so suddenly from cross-roads. I don't think the waggons would care a bit if one were killed. But I am very fond of my grey ponies. They are so pretty. They have quite Arabian heads. Colonel Carteret says so, and he has been in Arabia."

"But, my dear Pamela, do you think it worth while keeping a pair of ponies because they are pretty, and because Colonel Carteret, who knows about as much of a horse as I do of a Megalosaurus, says they have Arabian heads? Have you ever calculated what those ponies cost you?"

"No, Conrad; I should hate myself if I were always calculating the cost of things."

"Yes; that's all very well in the abstract. But if you are inclined to waste money, it's just as well to know how much you are wasting. Those ponies are costing you at the least a hundred and fifty pounds a year, for you could manage with a man less in the stables if you hadn't got them."

"That's a good deal of money certainly," said Mrs. Winstanley, who hated driving, and had only driven her ponies because other people in her position drove ponies, and she felt it was a right thing to do.

Still the idea of parting with anything

that appertained to her state wounded her deeply.

"I can't see why we should worry ourselves about the cost of the stables," she said; "they have gone on in the same way ever since I was married. Why should things be different now?"

"Don't you see that you have the future to consider, Pamela. This handsome income which you are spending so lavishly——"

"Edward never accused me of extravagance," interjected Mrs. Winstanley tearfully, "except in lace. He did hint that I was a little extravagant in lace."

"This fine income is to be reduced seven years hence to fifteen hundred a year, an income upon which—with mine added to it—you could not expect to be able to carry on life decently in such a house as this. So you see, Pamela, unless we contrive between us to put by a considerable sum of money before your daughter's majority, we shall be obliged to leave the Abbey House, and live in a much smaller way than we are living now."

"Leave the Abbey House!" cried Mrs. Winstanley with a horrified look. "Conrad, I have lived in this house ever since I was married."

"Am I not aware of that, my dear love? But, all the same, you would have to let this place, and live in a much smaller house, if you had only fifteen hundred a year to live upon."

"It would be too humiliating! At the end of one's life! I should never survive such a degradation."

"It may be prevented if we exercise reasonable economy during the next seven years."

"Sell my ponies then, Conrad; sell them immediately. Why should we allow them to eat us out of house and home. Frisky shies abominably if she is the least bit fresh, and Peter has gone so far as to lie down in the road when he has had one of his lazy fits."

"But if they are really a source of pleasure to you, my dear Pamela, I should hate myself for selling them," said the captain, seeing he had gained his point.

"They are not a source of pleasure. They have given me some awful frights."

"Then we'll send them up to Tattersall's immediately, with the carriage."

"Violet uses the carriage with Titmouse," objected Mrs. Winstanley. "We could hardly spare the carriage."

"My love, if I part with your ponies

from motives of economy, do you suppose I would keep a pony for your daughter?" said the captain with a grand air. "No; Titmouse must go, of course. That will dispose of a man and a boy in the stables. Violet spends so much of her life on horseback, that she cannot possibly want a pony to drive."

"She is very fond of Titmouse," pleaded the mother.

"She has a tendency to lavish her affections on quadrupeds—a weakness which hardly needs fostering. I shall write to Tattersall about the three ponies this morning; and I shall send up that great raking brown horse Bates rides at the same time. Bates can ride one of my hunters. That will bring down the stable to five horses—my two hunters, Arion, and your pair of carriage horses."

"Five horses," sighed Mrs. Winstanley pensively; "I shall hardly know those great stables with only five horses in them. The dear old place used to look so pretty and so full of life when I was first married, and when the squire used to coax me to go with him on his morning rounds. The horses used to move on one side, and turn their heads so prettily at the sound of his voice—such lovely, sleek, shining creatures, with big intelligent eyes."

"You would be a richer woman if it had not been for those lovely, sleek, shining creatures," said Captain Winstanley. "And now, love, let us go round the gardens, and you will see the difference that young able-bodied gardeners are making in the appearance of the place."

Mrs. Winstanley gave a feeble little sigh as she rose and rang the bell for Pauline. The good old grey-haired gardeners—the men who had seemed to her as much a part of the gardens as the trees that grew in them—these hoary and faithful servants had been cashiered, to make room for two brawny young Scotchmen, whose dialect was as Greek to the mistress of the Abbey House. It wounded her not a little to see these strangers at work in her grounds. It gave an aspect of strangeness to her very life out of doors. She hardly cared to go into her conservatories, or to loiter on her lawn, with those hard unfamiliar eyes looking at her. And it wrung her heart to think of the squire's old servants thrust out in their old age, unpensioned, uncared for. Yet this was a change that had come about with her knowledge, and, seemingly, with her consent. That is to say, the captain had

argued her into a corner, where she stood, like the last forlorn king in a game of draughts, fenced round and hemmed in by opponent kings. She had not the strength of mind to assert herself boldly, and say: "I will not have it so. This injustice shall not be."

A change had come over the spirit of the Abbey House kitchen, which was sorely felt in Beechdale and those half-dozen clusters of cottages within a two-mile radius, which called themselves villages, and all of which had turned to the Abbey House for light and comfort, as the sunflower turns to the sun. Captain Winstanley had set his face against what he called, miscellaneous charity. Such things should be done and no other. His wife should subscribe liberally to all properly organised institutions—schools, Dorcas societies, maternity societies, soup kitchens, regulated dole of bread or coals, every form of relief that was given systematically and by line and rule; but the Good Samaritan business, the picking up stray travellers, and paying for their maintenance at inns, was not in the captain's view of charity. Henceforward Mrs. Winstanley's name was to appear with due honour upon all printed subscription-lists, just as it had done when she was Mrs. Tempest, but the glory of the Abbey House kitchen was departed. The beggar and the cadger were no longer sure of a meal. The villagers were no longer to come boldly asking for what they wanted in time of trouble—broth, wine, jelly, for the sick, allowances of new milk, a daily loaf when father was out of work, broken victuals at all times. It was all over. The kitchen doors were to be closed against all intruders.

"My love, I do not wonder that you have spent every sixpence of your income," said Captain Winstanley. "You have been keeping an Irish household. I can fancy an O'Donoghue or a Knight of Glyn living in this kind of way; but I should hardly have expected such utter riot and recklessness in an English gentleman's house."

"I am afraid Trimmer has been rather extravagant," assented Mrs. Winstanley. "I have trusted everything to her entirely, knowing that she is quite devoted to us, poor dear soul."

"She is so devoted, that I should think in another year or so, at the rate she was going, she would have landed you in the bankruptcy court. Her books for the last ten years—I have gone through them carefully—show an expenditure that is



positively ruinous. However, I think I have let her see that her housekeeping must be done upon very different lines in future."

"You made her cry very bitterly, poor thing," said his wife. "Her eyes were quite red when she came out of your study."

"Made her cry!" echoed the captain contemptuously. "She is so fat that the slightest emotion liquefies her. It isn't water, but oil that she sheds when she makes believe to weep."

"She has been a faithful servant to me for the last twenty years," moaned Mrs. Winstanley.

"And she will be a much more faithful servant to you for the next twenty years, if she lives so long. I am not going to send her away. She is an admirable cook, and now she knows that she is not to let your substance run out at the back door, I daresay she will be a fairly good manager. I shall look after her rather sharply, I assure you. I was caterer for our mess three years, and I know pretty well what a household ought to cost per head."

"Oh, Conrad!" cried his wife piteously; "you talk of us as if we were an institution, or a workhouse, or something horrid."

"My love, a man of sense ought to be able to regulate a private establishment, at least as well as a board of thick-headed guardians can regulate a workhouse."

Poor Mrs. Trimmer had left her new master's presence sorely bowed down in spirit. She was so abased that she could only retire to her own snug sitting-room, a panelled parlour, with an ancient ivy-wreathed casement looking into the stable-yard, and indulge herself with what she called "a good cry." It was not until later that she felt equal to communicating her grief to Forbes and Pauline, over the one o'clock dinner.

She had had a passage of arms, which she denominated "a stand further," with the captain; but it appeared that her own stand had been feeble. He had been going over the housekeeping accounts for the last ten years—accounts which neither the squire nor his wife had ever taken the trouble to examine—accounts honestly, but somewhat carelessly and unskilfully made out. There had been an expenditure that was positively scandalous, Captain Winstanley told Mrs. Trimmer.

"If you're dissatisfied, sir, perhaps I'd better go," the old woman said, tremulous

with indignation. "If you think there's anything dishonest in my accounts, I wouldn't sleep under this roof another night, though it's been my home near upon forty year—I was kitchenmaid in old Squire Tempest's time—no, I wouldn't stay another hour not to be doubted."

"I have not questioned your honesty, Trimmer. The accounts are honest enough, I have no doubt, but they show a most unjustifiable waste of money."

"If there's dissatisfaction in your mind, sir, we'd better part. It's always best for both parties. I'm ready to go at an hour's notice, or to stay my month, if it's more convenient to my mistress."

"You are a silly old woman," said the captain. "I don't want you to go. I am not dissatisfied with you, but with the whole system of housekeeping. There has been a great deal too much given away."

"Not a loaf of bread without my mistress's knowledge," cried Trimmer. "I always told Mrs. Tempest every morning who'd been for soup, or wine, or bread—yes, even to broken victuals—the day before. I had her leave and license for all I did. 'I'm not strong enough to see to the poor things myself, Trimmer,' she used to say, 'but I want them cared for. I leave it all to you.'"

"Very well, Trimmer. That kind of thing must cease from this hour. Your mistress will contribute to all the local charities. She will give the vicar an allowance of wine to be distributed by him in urgent cases; but this house will no longer be the village larder—no one is to come to this kitchen for anything."

"What, sir?—not in case of sickness?"

"No. Poor people are always sick. It is their normal state, when there is anything to be got by sickness. There are hospitals and infirmaries for such cases. My house is not to be an infirmary. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir; I understand that everything is to be different from what it was in my late master's time."

"Precisely. Expenses are to be kept within a certain limit. They are not to fluctuate, as they do in these books of yours. You must get rid of two or three women-servants. There are at least three too many. I am always seeing strange faces about upstairs. One might as well live in an hotel. Think it over, Trimmer, and make up your mind as to which you can best spare, and give them a month's



wages, and pack them off. I don't care to have servants about me who are under notice to quit. They always look sulky."

"Is that all, sir?" enquired the house-keeper, drying her angry tears upon her linen apron.

"Well, yes, that is all at present. Stay. What wages has my wife given you?"

"Sixty pounds a year," replied Trimmer, quite prepared to be told that her stipend was to be reduced.

"Then I shall give you seventy."

At this unexpected grace Trimmer began to tremble with an excess of indignation. She saw in this bounty a bribe to meanness.

"Thank you, sir; but I have never asked to have my wages raised, and I am quite contented to remain as I am," she answered with dignity. "Perhaps, if the ways of the house are to be so much altered, I may not feel myself comfortable enough to stay."

"Oh, very well, my good soul; please yourself," replied the captain carelessly; "but remember what I have told you about cadgers and interlopers, and get rid of two or three of those idle young women. I shall examine your house-keeping accounts weekly, and pay all the tradespeople weekly."

"They have not been used to it, sir."

"Then they must get used to it. I shall pay every account weekly—corn-merchant, and all of them. Bring me up your book on Saturday morning at ten, and let me have all other accounts at the same time."

Here was a revolution! Trimmer and Forbes and Pauline sat long over their dinner, talking about the shipwreck of a fine old house.

"I knew that things would be different," said Pauline, "but I didn't think it would be so bad as this. I thought it would be all the other way, and that there'd be grand doings and lots of company. What awful meanness! Not a drop of soup to be given to a poor family; and I suppose, if I ask my aunt and uncle to stop to tea and supper, any-when that they call to ask how I am, it will be against the rules."

"From what I gather, there's not a bite nor a sup to be given to mortal," said Mrs. Trimmer solemnly.

"Well, thank Providence, I can afford to buy a bit of tea and sugar and a quart loaf when a friend drops in," said Pauline, "but the meanness isn't any less disgusting. He'll want her to sell her cast-off dresses

to the secondhand dealers, I shouldn't wonder."

"And he'll be asking for the keys of the cellars, perhaps," said Forbes, "after I've kept them for five-and-twenty years."

### THE ORIGIN OF HAMLET.

SHAKESPEARE was wont to build upon foundations laid by other hands. The splendid superstructure was all his own unmistakably—his name was writ large upon it; but it was reared upon borrowed or appropriated materials. In considering his plays, it has been usual to look, not only for their themes pre-existing in certain popular collections of fables or novels, but for a dramatic treatment of such themes by earlier authors. He was a sort of Providence to small, rude, and primitive playwrights, shaping their rough-hewn ends; and assuredly, like that poet's pen he has himself described, giving to "airy nothings, a local habitation and a name."

Shakespeare's tragedy of Hamlet was, without doubt, preceded by a drama dealing with the same subject. In an epistle by Thomas Nash, prefixed to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* published in 1589, allusion is made to a tragedy called *Hamlet*; and on June 9th, 1594, Henslowe the manager records in his diary a performance of *Hamlet* by his company in the theatre at Newington Butts. Even then it was an old play, producing only a small receipt in comparison with the profits arising from the representation of new works. Malone, confidently though conjecturally, assigned to Thomas Kyd the *Hamlet* thus mentioned by Nash and Henslowe. As Mr. Collier says, "it is often alluded to by contemporaries, and there is not a moment's doubt that it was written and acted many years before Shakespeare's tragedy of the same name was produced."

The earliest known edition of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is the quarto published in 1603 by Nicholas Ling and John Trundell. The title-page describes the play as a tragical history, "as it hath been divers times acted by his Highnesse servants in the city of London, as also in the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford and elsewhere." In the following year a second quarto edition appeared, "newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy." These words imply that the quarto

of 1608 was not printed from a true and perfect copy.\*

The only known copy of the novel called *The Hystorie of Hamblet* bears date 1608, and was printed by Richard Bradocke for Thomas Pavier, and sold at his shop in Cornhill. It is believed that there were many previous issues of the book; but no evidence is forthcoming on this head. *The Hystorie of Hamblet* is a rude translation by an unknown hand from the French of Belleforest, who began to publish about 1560, in conjunction with Boistnau, a series of translations of the Italian novels of Bandello; amongst these was the story of Amleth. Belleforest gave it the following additional title: *Avec quelle ruse Amleth, qui depuis fut Roy de Dannemarch, vengea la mort de son père Horvendile, occis par Fengon, son frère, et autre occurrence de son histoire.* The novel, it may be added, is founded upon events in the mythical annals of Denmark, narrated by Saxo Grammaticus in the twelfth century.

The period of the story is described as a "long time before the kingdom of Denmark received the faith of Jesus Christ and embraced the doctrine of the Christians;" the common people were barbarous and uncivil, their princes cruel, without faith in loyalty, seeking nothing but to offend and depose each other. King Roderick was then reigning in Denmark, and he had appointed the brothers, Horvendile and Fengon, two valiant and warlike lords, to be joint governors of the province of Jute (Jutland). Horvendile was a famous pirate who had scoured the seas and havens of the north. Challenged to single combat by Collere, king of Norway (the Fortinbras of the play), who is grieved to find himself surpassed in feats of arms, Horvendile slays Collere, buries his adversary in a tomb with all honourable obsequies, and carries away much treasure to King Roderick. The grateful monarch bestows the hand of his daughter Geruth upon the victor. Of the marriage of Horvendile and Geruth is born Hamblet.

Fengon grows jealous of the success of Horvendile, and desires to rule alone in Jute. He secretly assembles a band of men, suddenly sets upon Horvendile while he is banqueting with his friends, and cruelly slays him. Before he had thus committed "parricide upon his brother,"

as the novelist describes the crime, Fengon had secured the illicit love of Geruth, a courteous princess "as any then living in the north parts, and one that had never so much as once offended any of her subjects, either commons or courtiers." Fengon, slandering his victim, gives out that he had interfered to defend Geruth from the blows of Horvendile, who was threatening the life of his consort, and that in the struggle ensuing Horvendile was slain; and false witnesses, the very men who had aided Fengon to murder his brother, depose in support of this story; so that instead of pursuing and punishing the malefactor for his crime, all the courtiers admired and flattered him in his good fortune. Thus encouraged, Fengon ventures to take Geruth to wife, "in that sort spotting his name with a double vice, and charging his conscience with abominable guilt and two-fold impiety."

Meantime Prince Hamblet perceived himself in danger of his life, abandoned of his mother, and forsaken of all men. He was assured that Fengon, apprehensive that if he attained to man's estate he would not long delay to avenge the death of his father, was only looking for an opportunity to murder him. He resolved, therefore, in imitation of Brutus, to counterfeit the madman. This he did with much craft, so that he seemed to have utterly lost his wits; he rent and tore his clothes, wallowing and lying in the dirt and mire, his face all filthy and black, running through the streets like a man distraught, not speaking one word but such as seemed to proceed from madness and mere frenzy, in such sort that he seemed fit for nothing but to make sport to the pages and rustling courtiers that attended in the court of his uncle and father-in-law. "But the young prince noted them well enough, minding one day to be revenged in such manner that the memory thereof should remain perpetually to the world." And under this veil he "covered his pretence, and defended his life from the treasons and practices of the tyrant his uncle."

Fengon suspects that the insanity of his nephew is assumed, and seeks in various ways to entrap him into a confession that he does but counterfeit madness, subjecting him to some such temptation as good St. Anthony underwent; but Hamblet, receiving timely warning from a friend, avoids betraying himself. It is then proposed to Fengon that he "should make

\* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, No. 530, p. 138 of the present volume, January 25th, 1879, "Young Shakespeare's Hamlet."

as though he were to go some long voyage concerning affairs of great importance, and that in the meantime Hamlet should be shut up alone in a chamber with his mother, wherein some other should be secretly hidden behind the hangings unknown either to him or to his mother, there to stand and hear their speeches;” Fengon being assured that if there were any point of wisdom and perfect sense in Hamlet’s spirit he would easily discover it to his mother, as being void of all fear that she would betray him. Fengon approves this suggestion, and his counsellor offers to be the man to stand behind the hangings to harken and bear witness of Hamlet’s speeches with his mother. Fengon quits the palace, affecting to go a long voyage, but really proceeds only to hunt in the forest; meantime, the counsellor secretly enters the queen’s chamber and hides himself behind the arras. The queen and her son presently draw near, when Hamlet, doubting some treason, uses his ordinary manner of dissimulation, and begins beating with his arms, as cocks strike with their wings, upon the hangings of the chamber; “whereby,” the novelist continues, “feeling something stirring under them, he cried, ‘A rat! a rat!’ and, drawing his sword, thrust it into the hangings, which done, he pulled the counsellor, half dead, out by the heels, made an end of killing him, and, being slain, cut his body in pieces, which he caused to be boiled and then cast into an open vault, that so it might serve for food to the hogs,” &c. He then in a speech of considerable power, which Mr. Collier suggests may have been supplied by an abler writer, better versed in translation, upbraids Geruth for her sins against his father and himself. “Weep not, madame,” he says, in conclusion, “to see my folly, but rather sigh and lament your own offence, tormenting your conscience in regard of the infamy that hath so defiled the ancient renown and glory that in times past honoured Queen Geruth.” In reply the queen admits that she had wronged her son greatly in marrying Fengon; but pleads as her excuse her small means of resistance, the treason of the palace, and the little confidence she could repose in the courtiers, all wrought to the will of the tyrant. She declares that she had never consented to the murder of Horvendile, swearing by the majesty of the gods that if it had lain in her power to resist the tyrant, although it had been with the

loss of her blood, she would surely have saved the life of her lord and husband, “with as good will and desire,” she protests, addressing Hamlet, “as since that time I have often been a means to hinder and impeach the shortening of thy life, which being taken away, I will no longer live here upon earth, for seeing that thy senses are whole and sound, I am in hope to see an easy means invented for the revenging of thy father’s death.”

Fengon returns, affecting to have been away on a long journey, and asks concerning the man who had engaged to hide behind the hangings and entrap Hamlet. That prince tells him the simple truth—that his spy had been slain, cut up, and eaten by hogs. Fengon, entertaining fears for his own safety, determines to send Hamlet to England, and appoints two faithful ministers to bear him company. These carry “letters engraved on wood” to the King of England, charging him to put Hamlet to death. But being at sea, the subtle Danish prince, while his companions sleep, reads their letters, and learns his uncle’s treason, “with the wicked and villainous minds of the two courtiers that led him to the slaughter.” He accordingly alters the letters, and so contrives that Fengon seems to ask that the two courtiers may be put to death, and, further, that the hand of the King of England’s daughter may be bestowed upon Prince Hamlet.

The novel then deals with matters which find no reflection in the drama. Hamlet discovers the King of England to be the son of a slave, and his queen to be the daughter of a chambermaid; it is agreed, however, that Hamlet shall wed the princess born of this curious union. He affects to be much offended at the death of Fengon’s ministers, but is appeased with a gift of a great sum of gold, which he melts and encloses in two hollow staves. At the end of a year he returns to Denmark, and entering the palace, finds his funeral being celebrated; for all believe him to have died in England. Great “store of liquor” is provided, and drunkenness, described as “a vice common and familiar among the Almaines and other nations inhabiting the north part of the world,” prevails generally. Hamlet, finding so many of his enemies, their “drunken bodies filled with wine, lying like hogs upon the ground,” causes the hangings about the hall to fall down and cover them all over; he then fastens down the hangings with sharp nails, so that none can loose themselves or get



from under them; finally he sets fire to the four corners of the hall, so that all therein are consumed by "the inevitable and merciless flames." Fengon had previously withdrawn to his chamber; Hamlet, with his sword naked in his hand, seeks him there. Fengon endeavours to defend himself, but his sword has been nailed to the scabbard, so that he cannot unsheath it. "As he sought to pull out, Hamlet gave him such a blow upon the chine of the neck that he cut his head clean from his shoulders, and as he fell to the ground said: 'This just and violent death is a first reward for such as thou art; now go thy ways, and when thou comest in hell, see thou forget not to tell thy brother, whom thou traitorously slewest, that it was his son that sent thee thither with the message, to the end that being comforted thereby his soul may rest among the blessed spirits and quit me of the obligation which bound me to pursue his vengeance upon mine own blood.'" Having thus slain his uncle, Hamlet makes an oration to the Danes, explaining to them the wickedness of Fengon, and demanding at their hands "the price of his own virtue and the recompense of his victory." The Danes are much moved, and the affections of the nobility are won; "some wept for pity, others for joy;" with one consent they proclaim him King of Jute and Chersonese.

Here the story of Hamlet might have concluded happily; but further adventures are in store for him. He returns to England to marry the king's daughter. But the king's feelings change towards his son-in-law. It seems that in early times Fengon and the King of England had been friends and companions-in-arms, and had sworn together that if either chanced to be slain by any man whatsoever, his death should surely be avenged by the survivor, who should take the quarrel upon him as his own, and never cease till he had done his best endeavour in the matter. The king desires to accomplish his oath, but without defiling his hands with the blood of his daughter's husband; he is unwilling, moreover, to break the laws of hospitality, or to pollute his house by the traitorous massacre of his friend. He determines, therefore, to make a stranger the avenger of Fengon's death; and, being a widower, sends Hamlet to demand for him the hand in marriage of Hermetrude, the Queen of Scots. Now this Hermetrude was a maid of haughty courage, who despised

marriage, "not esteeming any worthy to be her companion," and, by reason of this arrogant opinion, there never came any man to desire her love but she caused him to lose his life. But on the arrival of Hamlet, regarding him as the greatest prince then living, she determines to make him her husband, and to deprive the English princess of her lawful spouse. She reveals to him that the King of England had with a treacherous motive sent him to Scotland, purposing that he shall there lose his life; altogether she so welcomes and entices Hamlet, kissing and toying with him, that forgetful of the affections of his first wife, he resolves to marry the Queen of Scots, "and so open the way to become king of all Great Britain." His English wife, much distressed at his inconstancy, warns him that her father is seeking means to destroy him, and that Hermetrude will one day surely cause his overthrow. Invited to a banquet by the king on his return to England, Hamlet is in danger of assassination; but he prudently wears armour under his clothes, his friends doing likewise, and so all escape with life. Soon the King of England pays the penalty of his treachery: he is slain by his son-in-law in a pitched battle, and the whole country of England is thereupon, for the third time, overrun and sacked by the barbarians of Denmark and the islands.

But Hamlet's career now draws near its end. Setting sail for Denmark, after his victory, laden with spoil and accompanied by his two wives, he learns that his uncle Wiglere, the son of King Roderick, and the brother of Geruth, had seized upon the kingdom, "saying that neither Horvendile nor any of his held it but by permission, and that it was in him, to whom the property belonged, to give the charge thereof to whom he would." For a time, with rich presents, Hamlet buys peace of Wiglere and his withdrawal from the kingdom. But the treacherous Hermetrude, notwithstanding Hamlet's deep love of her, holds secret communication with Wiglere, promising to marry him if he will but take her out of the hands of her husband. Wiglere thereupon sends to defy Hamlet, and to proclaim open war against him. As the novelist records: "The thing that spoiled this virtuous prince was the over great trust and confidence he had in his wife Hermetrude, and the vehement love he bare unto her, not once repenting the wrong in that case

done to his lawful spouse, and but for which peradventure misfortune had never happened unto him, and it would never have been thought that she whom he loved above all things would have so villainously betrayed him." Hamlet fights a battle with Wiglere; Hermetrude betrays her husband to the enemy; Hamlet is slain, and Hermetrude yields herself with all her dead lord's treasures into the hands of Wiglere, who gives orders for presently celebrating his marriage with his nephew's widow. "Such was the end of Hamlet, son to Horvendile, Prince of Jute; to whom, if his fortune had been equal with his inward and natural gifts, I know not which of the ancient Grecians and Romans had been able to have compared with him for virtue and excellency."

It is "a far cry" from Hamlet, the rude Viking of the early novel, to Shakespeare's Hamlet:

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers.

But the germs of the tragedy are certainly discoverable in Bandello's story. There are marked and curious resemblances, indeed, between the two productions, for all the dull prose of the one and the divine poetry of the other. But while in the novel may be perceived rough antitypes of Hamlet and Gertrude, Claudius, Fortinbras, Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, there are no traces of the fair Ophelia, of Laertes, of Horatio, of Osric, and other minor characters. The novel is without mystery or subtlety of any kind; it is plain to baldness, intelligible to the meanest capacity. In it no question arises touching the hero's mental condition; it is made clear that he simulates madness because he believes his own life threatened by the king, quite as much as in order to avenge his father's murder. The antic disposition of Shakespeare's Hamlet is not due to fear of Claudius. The Hamlet of the novel never doubts or hesitates for a moment, and has not the slightest need of a supernatural visitant from the other world to assure him of his uncle's guilt, and prompt him to revenge a foul and most unnatural murder; still less does he require the performance of a troop of players to catch the conscience of the king. The novelist fails to satisfy the demands of poetical justice. Fengon is sufficiently punished, if the circumstances of his doom are rather brutally contrived; but nothing

is told of the fate of Queen Geruth, or of the English princess, Hamlet's first wife; and at the end the wicked Hermetrude is left prosperous and happy in the love of Hamlet's uncle, the victorious Wiglere. It may be only an accident, but it is certainly curious, that the first syllable of Geruth and the last syllable of Hermetrude form the word Gertrude, the name of Shakespeare's queen.

It is possible, of course, that Shakespeare had no direct acquaintance with this prose History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark; there is no absolute proof that it existed in print before the publication of the first quarto edition of the tragedy, and it is held certain that he did not go straight to Belleforest or Bandello for his materials. Mr. Carew Hazlitt, indeed, suggests that Shakespeare knew nothing of the prose story, and simply resorted "to the earlier drama on the subject, and made the piece what it is out of the inexhaustible resources of his own marvellous mind." But in this earlier drama, attributed to Thomas Kyd, the incidents of the novel, and even certain of its phrases, must assuredly have been employed, or their presence in Shakespeare's tragedy cannot be accounted for. However, the earlier drama by Kyd—if Kyd is to be credited with it—having become extinct, we are left to surmise the extent of Shakespeare's obligations to it, and the amount of poetic invention he grafted upon his original. Kyd, as a dramatist, dealt largely in crimes, atrocities, and horrible catastrophes; to gratify the crowd he did not hesitate to outrage sense and discretion. But he was a skilful writer of blank verse. In this respect, "I am inclined," says Mr. Collier, "among the predecessors of Shakespeare to give Kyd the next place to Marlow." Nevertheless, from what is known of Kyd's plays, there need be little hesitation in ascribing to Shakespeare all or nearly all that is admirable in the tragedy of Hamlet.

It may be noted that Hamlet has been a source of some perplexity to the costumiers of the stage. Is the early period of the story to be assigned to the play? Are Shakespeare's Danes to be regarded as Vikings ignorant of Christianity? Mr. Marshall writes upon this subject: "The period of Hamlet's existence in Saxo Grammaticus is placed about the second century before Christ; but the chronology of Saxo is utterly worthless. As after 794 we have the names of all the kings of Denmark preserved, Hamlet must have

existed, if he really did exist, before then; and as England could not have paid tribute to Denmark before 783, the number of years, arguing from the allusion in the text, within which Hamlet could have existed, is very limited. The fact is, it is utterly impossible to ascertain the exact period of the events in this play; and, therefore, all the attempts that have been made from time to time to secure accuracy in the costumes are mere waste of ingenuity. Any time during the ninth or tenth centuries might be taken, according to fancy; but the spirit of the principal character, and many trifling allusions that occur in the play, would even then strike us as anachronisms." The university of Wittenberg, for instance, was not founded till 1502. The tone of the play throughout pertains to Shakespeare's own time, and originally, of course, the actors assumed costumes of an Elizabethan pattern. Mr. Boaden writes, in his *Life of John Kemble*, 1825: "We have for so many years been accustomed to see Hamlet dressed in the Vandyke costume, that it may be material to state that Mr. Kemble played the part in a modern court dress of rich black velvet with a star on the breast, the garter, and pendant ribbon of an order, mourning sword and buckles, with deep ruffles; the hair in powder, which, in the scenes of feigned distraction, flowed dishevelled in front and over the shoulder." Later Hamlets have worn costumes of an earlier period than Vandyke's, so far as they could be assigned any date whatever; tunics of black velvet, trimmed with bugles; silk stockings; short cloaks; and low-crowned hats or flat bonnets, heavily laden, after a hearse-like fashion, with black ostrich plumes. In his careful and picturesque revival of Hamlet at the Lyceum, in 1864, Mr. Fechter sought to give "an antique Danish colouring" to the tragedy. He retained the blonde wig, the black stuff-dress with ample cloak, he had first donned at the Princess's, in 1861; the scenery represented "massive architecture of the Norman style;" and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern no longer appeared "in that conventional costume which is vaguely associated with the courtiers of Spain or Italy, but were dressed as northern warriors—bluff fellows, with thick beards, coarse leggings, and cross garters; and the other characters were after the same model." Mr. Bellew, reading Hamlet in front of a representation of the tragedy by mute performers, hung the stage with

curtains imitative of the Bayeux Tapestry, and caused the hero to appear as "a princely figure of the tenth century," exhibiting upon his cloak the favourite Danish bird of fate, the raven. "Had I altogether followed my own convictions," explained Mr. Bellew, "I should have preferred the figure of Hamlet entirely dressed in royal purple—the proper colour for kingly mourning—and draped with the 'inky cloak.' It would have been more correct, but perhaps too startling a novelty for the English eye." Mr. Tom Taylor, who, in 1873, produced a version of Hamlet at the Crystal Palace, attired the dramatis personæ in the costume of the thirteenth century, "because," as he writes, "it seemed to me both dignified and picturesque." On the other hand, Mr. Irving has apparently decided, for like reason, in favour of the style of the fifteenth century; and the grace and picturesqueness of the dresses now worn at the Lyceum in Hamlet are quite unquestionable.

#### AN "ESCROQUERIE."

"I OFTEN wonder," said the old gentleman, when he told me the story, "I often wonder whether there really was any swindling in it or not; and if so, on which side the swindling was. But it was a terrible business anyway."

The narrator was, perhaps, on the whole, the most constant frequenter of the trentet-quarante in the whole of Spielbad-vor-der-Höhe, where my wife and I were then spending a day or two on our way into Switzerland. Indeed, he seemed more at home in the Kursaal than anywhere else, and was on friendly terms, not only with the chefs-de-parti and inspectors, but with pretty nearly every croupier and employé about the place. I won't mention his real name, though few habitués of Spielbad will have much difficulty in guessing it. We used to call him "Socrates;" not from any very specially philosophical tendencies about him, but on account of his domestic arrangements, which were tolerably notorious. When the amiable Madame X. used to make the house in the Unter Promenade too warm to hold him, poor Socrates would come over to the Kursaal in search of peace; and as this happened on the average about twice in every twenty-four hours, the administration made a very good thing out of



Socrates, and, when Madame X. died, no doubt bewailed her loss at least as deeply as most of her acquaintances.

There had been a slight misunderstanding that afternoon at the roulette, owing to an endeavour on the part of one of the "professors" of that noble science to possess himself of my stake, and Socrates, who was standing close by, had come to my rescue. A word from him was of course enough. The professor had already absorbed the disputed coins, and was permitted to retain them; but, at a sign from the inspector to the presiding employé, an equal number were dealt out to me, so all parties were satisfied. I noticed that my late antagonist, who, it appeared, was a new importation from a neighbouring establishment, contented himself with losing a florin or two under the evidently close supervision, not only of both inspectors, but of the chef-de-parti, who, at a look from one of them, had glided quietly behind him, and presently retreated without beat of drum.

There is no doubt a line to be drawn between your professor proper and your escroc. But I am afraid it is rather a thin line, and one of rather wavering tendencies. Wavering, too, I am afraid, in the majority of cases, in relation rather to the amount of temptation than to any higher consideration. In this particular case, for instance, there could have been but very small opening for any *bonâ fide* error on the professor's part, inasmuch as my new friend Socrates had been watching him, and was quite ready to swear that he had not been playing at all.

"He saw you were new at it, sir," said he, "and thought you would be safe prey. In fact, it was a suspicion of this that made me watch him."

Of course I thanked my new acquaintance, and we soon fell into conversation, the principal part in which naturally turned upon our professional friend and his brethren; a subject, this, in which I soon found that Socrates was well up—as he was, indeed, in every other relating to his favourite tables. One anecdote he told amused me particularly.

There are, of course, various ways in which your escroc will contrive, as occasion offers, to possess himself of the stray property of unwary players. But his best chance is when someone, raking in his winnings in a hurry, or with that undue eagerness on which your beau joneur looks with such supreme contempt, leaves

behind on the table some stray coin which he has overlooked in the scramble, and which the watchful professor promptly marks down as his own. Of course it would not do for him to take it up at once; in the first place, because after all it may have been left intentionally; and in the second, because it would be at once obvious that a stake which had just won could not possibly consist of a single coin. Cases have, indeed, been known in which an enterprising professor has calmly drawn the croupier's attention to the waif on which his affections were set as to a stake which had not yet been paid. But this is the very sublimity of escroquerie, a daring height to be reached but by few. As a rule, your picker-up of these unconsidered trifles will take his chance of leaving them on the table for at least one or two coups; venturing at the utmost no further than just to shift it with his rake, perhaps to some other part of the table, perhaps only to a greater distance from a neighbouring stake. Should this minor assertion of proprietorship draw any remonstrance either from the rightful owner or from any watchful inspector, our cautious friend can still back out with an apology for his inadvertence. Should the manœuvre escape unnoticed he is of course safe, and has only to wait till the next turn of the cards shall have proved favourable to carry off the double stake for which he has been working so carefully.

It was Socrates who told me a story, which many of the habitués of the tables will no doubt remember, how one day at Spielbad a young Englishman left unheeded on the red, not a mere five-franc piece, or louis even, but a hundred-franc note.

At first our professor—it is, perhaps, the less invidious term—could hardly believe that it was really an oversight, and every moment expected to see the tempting little waif reclaimed. Twice again the rouge came up. The hundred-franc note became four hundred-franc notes, and still the professor, watching it with hungry eyes, could not realise the fact that it was in truth a possible prey. When suddenly the young Englishman threw a mille-franc note upon the black. The professor almost cried aloud with surprise and delight. Even an Englishman would hardly bet on both the red and the black at the same time. The hundred-franc note was a derelict after all.

But now a fresh difficulty presented itself in the very magnitude of the prize. It

was hardly likely that the occurrence should have escaped the notice of the inspectors on duty, one of whom happened unluckily to be the sharpest of the whole staff. Besides—a hundred-franc note! That was the initial stake. Who in the whole room would be persuaded into believing that he, Professor Minimum, had ever been lawfully possessed of even half the sum?

Time flew by as poor M. Minimum vainly cudgelled his brain for some feasible means of appropriating the coveted prize, which every moment seemed more and more certain to escape him. Already another rouge had swelled the amount to eight hundred francs. The series could not last for ever. And yet the only plan he had as yet been able to hit upon presenting even a chance of success was dangerous, if not desperate. It was just possible that the inspector might not have "spotted" the Englishman's error, while the difficulty as to the amount of the stake might be got over by pretending that the hundred-franc note had been given him to play on someone else's account. But then suppose they should insist on knowing who that someone else was? They were quite capable of it. Or suppose the inspector had observed the original blunder? Poor M. Minimum stole a furtive glance at the inspector's face, and felt that on that point, at all events, there was not much doubt.

And yet his fingers itched to handle that little bundle of soiled and crumpled notes. Itched at length so furiously, that he had fairly made up his mind to face the danger, and had actually laid his hand upon a rake wherewith to draw it from the board, when again came the words of fate:

"Le jeu est fait. Rien ne va plus."

"Un!" The chance is surely gone. At the best, rouge cannot now win this coup, whilst the chances are something like seventy or eighty to one against even the possible redemption of a refait. Poor M. Minimum holds his breath as the second row of cards is dealt; and before it is completed, it seems to him as if he had been holding it the better part of his lifetime. One would think that all the aces and twos and threes in the pack had congregated together for the express purpose of prolonging his suspense. "Twelve—thirteen—fifteen—eighteen—nineteen—twenty-one." The feeble hope is vanishing with every card that falls. A single high card now, and all is lost. But no.

"Twenty-three—twenty-four—twenty five—twenty-seven—twenty-eight—thirty!" There is but one chance now. Nothing can save him but another ace—the eighth in that single point! Poor M. Minimum shuts his eyes, and as he does so the ace of spades drops upon the board, and amid a buzz of amazement from the galerie the dealer proclaims:

"Un après!" and the eight hundred francs are pushed into the prison of "the line."

M. Minimum's mind is made up now. He will run no further risk of seeing those coveted notes, already looked upon as his own property, swept back into the bank. Let them but once get out of prison, and he will claim them at any cost. Nay, he will not even wait for their release. Half of such a loaf as this is better than the no bread which would follow upon an adverse turn of the cards, and M. Minimum's mouth is already open to declare his option to "partager," when suddenly a brilliant idea flashes across him, and it shuts again as with a spring. In another moment he is by the Englishman's side, his hand upon his sleeve.

"Monsieur—monsieur!" he whispers eagerly.

"Hold hard a bit," replies the Englishman, eagerly busy with his stake on the forthcoming coup; and poor M. Minimum has to fret and fume in vain. There is no audience to be had until the next coup, even now dealing, shall have come off. But our professor's star is in the ascendant. Another rouge releases the whole eight hundred francs once more, and the Englishman, laughing heartily as another of his mille-franc notes flutters before the croupier's rake from the black to the bank, turns round at last and demands briskly:

"Well, old chap! And what do you want?"

M. Minimum confounds himself in apologies; but would monsieur be so gentil as to do him one little favour?

"All right, old chap. What is it?"

Well; monsieur will pardon M. Minimum, but—perhaps monsieur is himself married? Not monsieur, he thanks goodness. Nor does not want to be yet.

Ah, well; but that is equal. Monsieur is very gentil, and can sympathise. The fact is that he—M. Minimum—has promised his wife never to play again. What will you? They are exacting, these poor little women. And now behold Madame Minimum, who comes from entering the

room, and if he dares but to remove his money, son Dieu! but she will make him a scene.

Very likely, the Englishman thinks. But, by Jove! how can he help that, you know?

And then M. Minimum tells him how he can help it. Which is simply by withdrawing the eight hundred francs as if they were his own, and handing them over to M. Minimum by-and-by on the terrace outside.

Oh, yes. Monsieur will be happy to do that. And the next moment the inspector, astonished at seeing the oblivious Englishman suddenly reclaim his long-neglected property, and walk off with it in his pocket, asks himself wonderingly what possible access of honesty can have come over M. Minimum, who, you may depend upon it, is not long in giving the slip to the imaginary Madame M., and appearing upon the terrace to touch his well-earned prize.

"And now," said my new acquaintance, when I had at length done laughing over M. Minimum's successful coup, "let me tell you that other story, which did not end by any means so satisfactorily, and about the true history of which I have not, as I said, even yet been able to make up my mind.

"M. Dorian had been through life, if his account of himself to me could be trusted, an unlucky man. Perhaps his account was not to be trusted. Certainly the chef-de-parti, when I happened casually to mention the subject, shrugged his shoulders and charged me to beware of escrocs. Dick Thornton, too, who, though rather a harum-scarum fellow, had—or was supposed to have, I never quite knew which—some insight into character, laughed loudly at M. Dorian, whom he christened 'Dismal Jemmy.' I'm not very brilliant myself, and don't pretend to know. But it certainly seems to me that, if he were an impostor, it was rather an unfortunate line to take for a man whose livelihood, such as it was, was earned solely by placing his luck at the service of other people.

"Sometimes I used to fancy that his misfortunes, if they existed, might be traced, to some extent, to this very cause. It had its compensations, no doubt. In my own brief acquaintance with him I can recall more than one instance in which tender-hearted people have been so struck with the tale of his ill-fortune, that they

have, simply on that account, risked in his hands money they would not otherwise have thought of employing in that way. But, on the whole, I can't help thinking that, if a man be unlucky, the less he says about his ill-luck the better. It may be, of course, because I am dull; but I know that if I wanted anyone to play for me—which I don't—I certainly should not employ a man who told me beforehand that he was quite sure to lose.

"M. Dorian, however, seemed to wear his heart upon his sleeve. I don't know whether he confided his private history to everyone as he confided it to me. Indeed, I don't think he did, if only for the reason that few people would have been weak enough to submit to being bored by the confidence. Perhaps, when he thought it politic, he told a different story. I often wish that I had not been so foolishly punctilious, and had compared notes a little with other people. But in what few enquiries I did make, I must say that, though I often found points in the story as told to me which were quite new even to those who fancied they knew all about M. Dorian, I never yet happened to mention one which met with anything like a downright contradiction.

"And a melancholy story it was, false or true. According to it M. Dorian had begun life with fair prospects enough, which had gradually vanished one by one, not by any fault of his own, but through sheer ill-luck. His father had been connected in some way with the Paris press, and, young Dorian himself being a lad of considerable promise, had had no difficulty in securing for him an opening, which, could he but have followed it up, would almost certainly have ensured him both money and fame. But the boy was not strong; the father, himself a man of iron constitution, not even yet broken by more than fifty years of unlimited work and almost equally unlimited absinthe, was quite unable to comprehend the possibility of not having bequeathed that constitution to his son altogether unimpaired; and the result for young Dorian at eighteen years of age was a brain fever, which, though not permanently affecting his intellect, at all events visibly, left the brain quite unable to bear any serious strain, and put a final period to his brilliant prospects on the staff of the Portefeuille. Very shortly after his father's iron constitution snapped suddenly, as iron things will under too severe a strain, and Pierre Dorian was left



at nineteen to do the best he could with the twelve thousand francs that were left behind. And, on the whole, his death seemed at first less unfortunate for Pierre than might have been imagined; for a peppery old Provençal uncle, largely engaged in the manufacture of sweet things at Grasse, and at loggerheads with his late brother-in-law for some thirty years, wrote on hearing of it to the effect that, if his nephew was a lad of any gumption, he had better come by the first train to Grasse, where there would be kept open for him, for exactly thirty-six hours, a situation in which, with ordinary diligence, his fortune was safe to be made. Poor Pierre was overjoyed, packed his portmanteau at top speed, arrived at the Mazas station fully fifty-five minutes before the time; travelled triumphantly as far as Arles; got out for a moment in search of a glass of lemonade, slipped up upon a grape-skin, and for the next week was laid up at the Auberge du Chemin de Fer with a broken arm. When he at length drove up through the great peach orchard to his uncle's big house at Grasse, the door was promptly shut in his face.

"I won't take up your time with any further details; but the rest of the story was very like the beginning. Every now and then some fresh chance would seem to turn up, but would always be closely followed by its counter-chance. It was not merely that any error or blunder on his part—and M. Dorien readily owned to plenty of both—invariably brought down the full measure of that retribution which a luckier man would probably have escaped altogether, but that, let him be as careful or as right as he might, something would always turn up at the last moment to set everything wrong. 'Did monsieur think,' he would ask, 'that he had acted wrongly or unwisely in such and such a case?' No; I could not honestly say that he had. 'Did monsieur think that he would have acted either wisely or rightly in adopting such or such another course?' Certainly not. There could be no doubt of that. 'And yet, look you, as things turned out, had that alternative course been adopted, there would have been success. Whereas now—'

"And so poor M. Dorien had drifted on until at last he had settled down, a very sediment of humanity, into the position in which I had encountered him—a professor of the roulette at the very 'outside' little gambling-place of Zilberhölle.

"To make matters better he had, twelve months before, at the age of forty or thereabouts, taken to himself a wife. Or rather, I believe, it would be speaking more correctly to say that the brave little sempstress who worked so hard for her bit of black bread and flask of sour wine in the little one-roomed chalet upon the mountain-side, had, out of pure compassion, herself taken charge of the tall, hollow-eyed, cadaverous-looking man, whose one remaining shirt—kept carefully for Kursaal wear—stood in such desperate need of her services, and who thanked her with so pleasant a smile for the aid he frankly confessed he had no other means of repaying.

"For 'Dismal Jemmy' had a very pleasant smile, and one which I could not but fancy had, at one time, been frequent enough. There was a sort of suppressed buoyancy too about the man, as though an originally sanguine disposition had been pressed down and down by the cumulative weight of ever-recurring disappointment, till the load had become altogether too heavy to be moved, but which was still there in ever concentrated force; no longer, indeed, rising and falling with every momentary variation in the burthen which weighed it down, but ready, at any serious lightening, to spring up again with perhaps even dangerous vehemence.

"Just now, however, it had come to the pass that any serious lightening—or, in truth, any lightening at all—of the load which weighed down M. Dorien must come very speedily, or would most assuredly come too late. The brave little sempstress had done her best, and for several months the professor's head had, at all events, been kept above water, whilst the professor himself, roused by the comparative sunshine of his new happiness out of the half torpid acquiescence in a condition of chronic ill-fortune which had of late years rendered even the mischances of the gaming-table almost a matter of indifference, had begun once more to wonder if luck were indeed about to change at last, and to feel the old sharp pang gripping at his heart as piece after piece passed steadily away to swell the stores of the insatiable bank.

"For, so far as concerned the roulette, M. Dorien's luck showed very little change. He would win sometimes, of course, and then his deep-set eyes would begin to sparkle, and he would withdraw two or three francs from his increasing

stake, and thrust them into his pocket with the evident determination of carrying them home to his brave little Marie. But then the luck would change again, and the growing stake would suddenly disappear, and M. Dorian would clench his hands and grind his teeth, and the big drops would start out upon his forehead as he turned away from the fatal table—only to turn to it again the next moment with the two or three rescued francs clasped nervously between his trembling fingers. I doubt much if a single sou that had once come into that dry, shaking, skeleton hand ever found its way to the little chalet on the mountain-side.

"And by-and-by the time came when the brave little helper at home was herself hors de combat—at least, for the time. How poor Marie got through the weeks which followed her confinement, probably only two or three peasant workers—poor almost as herself—whose hovels neighboured her own, could even guess. And the husband's condition was more hopeless than ever. Even the most sanguine visitors had given up the idea of entrusting any commission to so evident a pauper as M. Dorian had now become, and the two or three comparative habitués—myself among the number—who from time to time had 'lent' him a five-franc piece or two, or purchased the secret of one of those ingenious 'systems,' of which few, except perhaps poor M. Dorian himself, understood the true value better than we did—even we had grown weary of the unprofitable operation of eternally pouring money into the bottomless sieve of an unlucky gambler's pocket. It seemed as though a crisis of some sort must come, and that speedily.

"When one morning, as I entered the play-room, I saw a startling change on M. Dorian's face. The hollow cheek was flushed, the sunken eyes wide and blazing with excitement, the bony fingers now tightly clenched, now opening and shutting with a snapping sound as he leaned breathless over the board. As I approached I saw the eager face whiten for a moment, then flush up again more deeply than before as I heard the familiar cry, 'Dix-sept, noir, impair et manque,' and saw the employé thrust a little heap of notes and gold towards a similar heap which lay upon the table, and on which the gaunt glittering eyes were hungrily fixed.

"I could hear the heavy labouring of his chest, but he did not move. Again the

little ball sped round, and again the announcement, 'Treize, noir, impair et manque,' doubled the stake in which he was so deeply interested, and which must now have reached the full Zilberhölle maximum, five thousand francs. M. Dorian's breath came and went more quickly than ever, and the bony fingers stretched instinctively towards the prize. But he set his teeth hard, clenched his hands so firmly behind his back that it seemed as though the very bones must soon be forced through their thin covering of skin, and let the stake remain untouched.

"Again the ball sped on its course. I could see the big beads gather on his forehead and drop one by one upon the board over which he leant. I don't mind confessing that something very like a shudder ran through my veins as I thought of what might follow should he prove to have tempted fate too far, and heard the low muttering of the parched lips:

"Non—pasencore—Marie!—Encore un coup, mon Dieu! encore un coup!"

"Rien ne va plus!"

"The decisive moment has arrived. The cylinder is turning very slowly, so slowly that you can plainly read the numbers as it revolves. For a moment the almost spent ball hovers on the very edge of the zero, and M. Dorian's face whitens to the lips. The next it glides half an inch farther and falls.

"Vingt-six—Noir, pair et passe!"

"With an inarticulate cry of triumph M. Dorian springs forward to seize his prize, when he is stopped by a heavy hand upon his shoulder.

"Arrêtez, monsieur," commands the stern voice of M. Carré, the presiding chef-de-parti. "That stake is not yours."

"I cannot pretend to describe the scene that followed. The unhappy man protested, argued, raved, called Heaven to witness that the stake was rightfully his; appealed to the galerie, who shook their heads, had not noticed who placed the original stake on the table, but could not in any wise associate the idea of M. Dorian with such a pile of notes and gold as that before them.

"Then poor M. Dorian recognised me, and turned to me with renewed hope. It was my louis—the good God reward me for it—which had won all this stake; my louis that I had given him this morning for—

"For your sick wife, M. Dorian," I could not help saying reproachfully.

"Mais, mon Dieu, oui!" he burst out. 'And was it not for her? See there, ten thousand francs—a fortune! And all for her, God bless her—all for her. He would take them to her now—this moment, and never, never, never enter a *salle-de-jeu* again. He would go—'

"But the strong hand of the *chef-de-parti* still held him back, and the official's eyes passed from one to another of the spectators as though in search of something. The next moment it seemed as though they had found what they sought, and a brother professor, less shabby in exterior than M. Dorien, but certainly of no more reputable character, seemed to exchange glances for an instant with the official, and then spoke quietly but decisively.

"C'est une erreur, Monsieur le Chef. The original stake was left behind, no doubt by accident, by the Russian count who left the room some ten minutes since.'

"You lie!" shrieked poor M. Dorien, springing wildly towards the speaker. But the servants of the *Kursaal*, headed by the commissary, had now gathered round and held him forcibly back. In vain the unfortunate man resisted, raved, wept, implored, fought like a madman to release himself and seize upon the wealth which but a moment since he had fondly fancied was his own.

"Assez!" cried the *chef-de-parti*, and signed to the employés to proceed. The players settled down to their places, the cylinder moved round once more, and as the last sounds of the struggling professor's forcible ejection died away, the announcement of, 'Trente-quatre, rouge, pair et passe,' swept back half of poor M. Dorien's ten thousand francs into the bank, where they were speedily joined by the other half.

"Were those ten thousand francs M. Dorien's, or was it really an attempted *escroquerie* like that which succeeded so well in the more skilful hands of M. Minimum? I have already told you that I cannot say, and probably now shall never know for certain. But the catastrophe that followed I know well I am not likely ever to forget.

"At least a couple of hours had passed by, and the incident of the morning seemed quite forgotten, when, happening accidentally to look up, I again saw M. Dorien standing just before me. He must have slipped in through the open window, and

had remained so far unobserved. His face was deadly white, his eyes glittering, his hands clasped behind his back under his coat. The *chef-de-parti* saw him almost at the same instant as myself, and moved angrily towards him.

"Allons, monsieur——" he began.

"But he got no farther. In a moment M. Dorien's right hand had come from beneath his coat, grasping a large double-barrelled pistol, with which he fired full into the official's face. The man fell—not killed, as we at first imagined, for the bullet missed its mark, and shattered the great mirror at the opposite end of the room, but startled by the suddenness of the attack. The next moment a second report was heard, and the lifeless body of M. Dorien fell heavily across the very table at which his newly-raised hopes had been so rudely scattered two hours before.

"As we raised him, we saw that the hand which held the pistol was already stained to the wrist with blood, and then we knew that there was more to learn. Scarcely waiting even to communicate to each other our too self-evident fears, several of us—myself among the number—set off for the little *châlet* on the mountain-side. At the commissary's suggestion, a wood-cutter, who passed by with his axe on his shoulder, was summoned to accompany, in case the cottage should be closed. But there was no need for his services. The little *châlet* was at the most not eight feet square, and its mouldering door, even had it been fastened from within, might have been pushed from its hinges with a single hand. But it stood wide open. The girl's body lay just within, the long black hair streaming across the very threshold, The blood came dripping down the worn stone step to meet us as we approached.

"They hushed it up, of course. Such stories are not good to tell of places that live by the roulette. The three victims—father, mother, and child—were buried as speedily as possible out of sight, the shattered mirror renewed, the soiled cloth of the fatal table replaced, and every trace of the 'unfortunate affair' removed before the next morning brought the time of opening round once more. Some of the casual visitors, indeed, left the place, but there were never very many of these, and just at that time fewer than ever. But they don't care to talk about the 'incident Dorien' at Zilberhölle even now."



## ALL IN HALF A CENTURY!

I AM sixty years of age; a fact which I state, not because it is of importance to anybody but myself, but because it is necessary for all to know who shall read the reminiscences which follow, with a proper understanding of the shortness of the time in which so many social changes in manners, customs, and the odds and ends of our busy civilisation have taken place. I confine my reminiscences to London—meaning by London the great city and its circumjacent towns, boroughs, and municipalities which now form the metropolis of the British Empire. That great metropolis, at the time when my eyes first opened to the light, contained rather less than a million of inhabitants, and now contains nearly four millions, who have spread themselves over an area of streets and houses as large as some counties, and larger than many. When I first began to notice with youthful intelligence the life around me, there were no omnibuses and cabs in the streets, and no policemen. Instead of omnibuses and cabs, there were cumbrous and lumber-some hackney-coaches, of antique build, drawn by two horses, and driven for the most part by superannuated old men, who were called in the slang of the day “Jarries,” clad in great-coats with multitudinous capes. The coaches were of no particular pattern, shape, or colour, inasmuch as they were not made to order for the particular service in which they were employed, but were simply the cast-off vehicles of the rich, grown too shabby and rickety for the taste of their original owners; though they continued, in the second and final stage of their existence, to be adorned with the gorgeous emblazonments of the royalty to which they once belonged, or of the ducal or other aristocratic families, who had given them away, as they did their old clothes and boots, as perquisites to their servants; or, perhaps, if they were very frugal, which they had consigned in part payment of new vehicles to their coachbuilders. There were few of them in the streets, and their services were not often in requisition; for their charges were high, and people in those days were not in such a desperate hurry as we are now, or much inclined to use a more rapid or more expensive form of locomotion than such as their legs provided. As for policemen, London somehow or other managed to do without more of

their aid than Bow Street officers afforded by day, and as was provided at night in the shape of watchmen—poor wheezy old fellows, for the most part—who were called “Charleys” in the vulgar parlance of the time. They had a kind of sentry-box built for their use, in which they took shelter during bad weather. Their business was not only to keep the peace—if they could—but to call out the hours from sunset to sunrise, and to notify the state of the weather to the half-slumbering denizens of the streets through which they patrolled. It was the fashionable fun of the time, among the roystering young men of the upper classes—or perhaps it would be better to say, richer classes—who were known as “bucks,” “bloods,” or “dandies,” to make assaults upon these helpless and inoffensive old men; and, if they could catch them asleep in their boxes, to carry them off, box and all, to the nearest gutter—or it might be pond—and there deposit them. This kind of “life in London,” as it was called, was depicted in a vulgar farce entitled *Tom and Jerry*—by Moncreiffe, who died scarcely twenty years ago—which had a long lease of popularity in the days of the last of the Georges.

Locomotion on the Thames, before the newly-discovered power of steam was utilised for the purpose, was infrequent and costly. The Margate hoys, as they were called, took weekly trips to that then remote town, and similar vessels traded and conveyed passengers between Wapping and Gravesend, having a full view as they passed between Greenwich and Woolwich of the last criminals that were ever exposed to rot on the gibbet by the laws of England—to show all intelligent foreigners, as William Cobbett (or someone else) said, that they had arrived in a civilised country. The watermen, with their coats and badges, still plied their trade on the river, and very jealously guarded the privileges of the close corporation or company to which they belonged. When it was hinted to these sturdy conservatives that steam was likely at some future time to take possession of the river, they either smiled with contemptuous incredulity, or shook their wise heads with anger at the wild revolutionary notion.

But steam is an old established means of easy locomotion compared with the “tram,” which is a modern innovation. There were no tramways in London or in any other city of Europe eighteen years ago, although they were well known in

America. It is scarcely ten years since they were laid down in London, Edinburgh, Paris, and other large cities. But it is not so easy for men in the prime of life, in the present year of 1879, to remember the time when there were neither railways nor steamboats in Europe, and when the late Dr. Lardner declared that it was madness to attempt to cross the Atlantic by steam. Yet such is the fact. Sixty years ago a friend of mine, as he often repeated, took ship at Leith to proceed to London, and after tossing about in contrary winds for ten days, took refuge on the eleventh in the quiet harbour of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

It may be difficult for the young and middle-aged in our day to realise to their minds this fact, that in the youth and early manhood of their fathers there were no lucifer-matches, and that the only means of procuring a light was the old-fashioned method of the flint, steel, and tinder-box. I remember my delight, when, a boy of nine or ten, I became possessor of a small bottle—such as the ladies now use for their smelling-salts—containing a chemical preparation, into which it was only necessary to dip a match to produce a light. This primitive improvement upon flint and steel continued but a short time, when, novelty as it was, it was superseded and cast back into the limbo of used-up antiquity by the lucifer-match, originally called a “congreve,” and the production of light by friction.

In those days there were no envelopes for letters, and postage was calculated by distance: twopence in the metropolitan district, tenpence to York, one shilling and twopence to Edinburgh, two shillings to John o’ Groat’s House, and something almost prohibitive to the continent of Europe. “Franks” were in great request; and members of both Houses of Parliament were daily if not hourly besieged by letter-writers, to obtain the privilege of their names on the corners of epistles, which would not have been sent through the post at all unless they could have been sent gratis. When Sir Rowland Hill proposed his scheme of a uniform rate of postage, he was considered a daring revolutionist destined to ruin the country, even when he fixed the rate temporarily at fourpence. When after a quiet interval, to accustom the panic-stricken public to the great change originally contemplated, the rate was reduced to a penny, elderly people held up their hands in dismay, and predicted the collapse, not only of the post-office, but of the empire of Great Britain.

When I was a youth women wore pattens. Are such articles ever seen in our day? At that time it was considered vulgar for a gentleman to wear a cotton shirt or a silk hat. The shirt of fine linen and the hat of beaver were *de rigueur*. Watches had double cases, between the outer and inner of which it was the custom to insert what were called watch-papers, on which were printed or written texts from Scripture, moral maxims, passages from the poets, or tender love effusions purporting to be original. Still more recently, and when in my prime, I remember that it was considered *contra bonos mores* and all the proprieties for a lady to ride in a hansom-cab, or for a gentleman to smoke in a lady’s presence; and worse still, if possible, for a lady to be seen in the streets with a gentleman who had a pipe or a cigar in his mouth.

I remember—and it is scarcely a memory of older date than thirty years—when a gentleman in full dress was not compelled by fashion to attire himself like a clergyman or a tavern waiter; when the fashionable evening dress was a blue coat and gilt buttons, and a coloured or embroidered vest; and when bright colours in the waistcoat were not considered the exclusive right of the footman or the costermonger. I remember, too, when ladies were not ashamed to be economical in their attire, and did not allow their silks or satins to trail on the ground, but wore their “gowns,” as they were called, of a length that just reached the ankle, and allowed the dainty little feet and a portion of the leg to be seen. This fashion pleased the gentlemen and did no harm to the ladies, conducing greatly to comfort in walking, besides saving a considerable sum in the dress-maker’s account.

I remember when the street, now called the Haymarket, in which stand two theatres, was really the market for hay; through which it was difficult to pass, at early morning, among the hay-carts that blocked up the whole thoroughfare. I remember the King’s Mews, where now stands the poor mean building called the National Gallery, when Trafalgar Square and the Nelson Column were non-existent; when Old London Bridge still spanned the stream between Fish Street Hill and St. Olave’s in Southwark; when there were no club-houses, no Reform, no Carlton, no Athenæum, no United Service, in that street of palaces—Pall Mall; when the Marble Arch stood in Piccadilly; when Tyburnia was occupied by market-gardeners and

nurserymen; when Westbournia was unbuilt, and when Blackfriars and Westminster Bridges were backed like dromedaries; when the Thames Tunnel was considered the wonder of the world; when the dingy old Houses of Parliament, consumed by fire in 1834, were still an architectural disgrace to the imperial city of Westminster.

I remember when the Times was a small sheet of four pages, price sevenpence, of which the government extorted fourpence in stamp duty, besides levying an excise upon the paper on which it was printed, and a duty of three shillings and sixpence on every advertisement which it contained; and when it was held a wonderful thing when that journal, and its rival, the Morning Chronicle, had attained a daily circulation of five thousand. Of course there was no Daily Telegraph and no Daily News in those days. The man who should have been rash enough to predict that a penny morning journal, unstamped and untaxed, should be able to print and sell an edition of two hundred and fifty thousand copies every morning, would in all probability have been made the subject of a writ de lunatico inquirendo.

I remember the old semaphore at work on the top of the Admiralty, communicating with its old-fashioned brother at Greenwich, and that again with similar structures standing at regular intervals all the way between London and Dover; and when the first faint rumour of the coming triumphs of electricity was received with incredulous laughter.

Of course I remember the first construction of railways, and the obstinate and vehement opposition they encountered, not only from the landed proprietors, but from the municipalities of the whole kingdom, as well as from both Houses of Parliament. The metropolis, which is now honeycombed by them under ground, and gridironed by them above ground, would not suffer a railway to approach its sacred limits nearer than Nine Elms on the southern side of the river, and Euston Square, contiguous to the squalid regions of Somers Town, on the north. Great dukes and earls, alarmed for what they called the amenity of their parks and pleasure-grounds, used all their influence, in and out of the legislature, to prevent the passing of the Acts of Parliament that were necessary for their construction. They and their friends appealed to every kind of prejudice to defeat the inevitable improvement that was approaching. There was, they said, to be no longer any privacy

in the country. The detested steam-engines were to scatter their flame-producing sparks on every side, and set fire to the farm buildings, and even to the ripe corn that grew upon the land through which they passed; and, worse than all, the sacred recreation of fox-hunting was thenceforward to become impossible, and the breed of horses was to deteriorate. The town of St. Albans, through which all the traffic and travel between London and the north had to pass, rendering the place both lively and prosperous, had sufficient influence to prevent the London and Birmingham Railway, as the London and North-Western was first called, from approaching within several miles of its hallowed precincts. The inhabitants of St. Albans did not discover until long afterwards, when it was too late to undo the mischief, that they had well-nigh ruined their town by their ignorant opposition to a public benefit. To this day St. Albans has not recovered from the blow which it inflicted upon itself by its dense incapacity to make friends with the inevitable. The poet Wordsworth was furious in his wrath against the projected railway that was to bring the multitude through the cherished solitudes of Windermere and all the Lake Country; and appealed to earth and heaven to prevent the outrage.

In the early days of my housekeeping, servants were not above their business, and a good cook expected no more than twelve pounds a year wages, and a good housemaid ten; then best mutton was not considered cheap at sevenpence a pound, nor the best beef at ninepence; but, per contra, good tea cost from six to eight shillings per pound, and the best loaf-sugar tenpence. In those times scarcely anybody except a millionaire thought of drinking claret; and fiery sherry, and still more fiery port, were the only wines to be seen at ordinary dinner-tables.

I remember the time, scarcely twenty years ago, when the Victoria and Euston Hotels, that stand facing each other at the Euston Station of the London and North-Western Railway, were considered marvels of size and enterprise; far surpassing in extent and grandeur anything that had been previously seen in England in the way of hotel accommodation; and when Warren's famous blacking warehouse, Number Thirty, Strand, stood on the site now occupied by the magnificent Charing Cross Hotel; and when a mean squalid market for the poorest of the poor, called the Brill, in Somers Town,



encumbered the spot where the lordly structure of the Midland Railway Terminus and Hotel now rears its palatial head.

I remember when the place now occupied by Exeter Hall was filled by a bazaar and menagerie, called Exeter Change, and where I often paid my juvenile and scanty cash to have a look at the lions, elephants, and other beasts that were there exhibited, before the Zoological Garden was opened to receive them. I also remember to have seen the lions in the Tower of London; and, at a period a quarter of a century after the lions had been removed, to have been a party to a hoax which was perpetrated upon an able French artist, who was sent for an illustrated paper to make a sketch of what was represented to him as the grand, historical, and antiquarian ceremony, annually performed, of washing those animals by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs.

I remember when I thought every man was good, and every woman beautiful; with that confession I think I have remembered my own folly, and conclude, lest I should make it more conspicuous.

## ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFITH'S DOUBLES,"  
&c. &c.

### CHAPTER XXXII. ON THE STONE TERRACE.

A GOOD deal of animation prevailed at Bevis after the arrival of Captain and Mrs. Dunstan, and the fine spring weather facilitated the visiting that was to be expected under the circumstances. Mrs. Drummond had lived in such retirement that many of Janet's neighbours had never made acquaintance with her in the old times, but saw her first as the lady of Bevis. She made a favourable impression upon all these persons; they pronounced her to be handsome and attractive—a little absent in manner, perhaps, and singularly quiet, which was not to be wondered at in the case of a girl who had lived entirely with old people, and had not yet had time to get over the effect of that association, and to feel her own freedom and importance. Captain Dunstan was already popular, as, indeed, he deserved to be, for his tastes were sportsmanlike, his manners were good, his prejudices were few, and his political opinions were rather neutral-tinted; so that he might be said to possess almost every requisite for the winning of general favour, and to be free from the angles that either knock others,

or are knocked against by others, in the case of the best intentioned individuals.

On two points there was absolute uniformity of opinion. The first was Janet's dress. This was the subject of general commendation. Mrs. Dunstan displayed perfect taste in her attire, which was at once rich, simple, and becoming; and several ladies had contrived speedily to ascertain that she was not indebted for that result to the hateful services of a man milliner. The second point was the demeanour of the young couple. This was pronounced to be perfect; no nonsense about it, though theirs was well known to have been a love match, but the pleasantest attention to everybody, and just what there ought to be to each other.

That Bevis was not to be forsaken for London by its owners until late in the season, when they were to go to town for a few weeks, was also taken well by the neighbourhood. Janet had been over tired in Paris, and, as Amabel had discerned, rather bewildered than pleased. It would, however, be more correct to say that she was at first pleased, and then bewildered; for the latter condition set in when the restless questions began to put themselves ceaselessly to her: What was it that had come between her husband and herself; what was it that had changed the glory of her noonday into twilight? Whence came this intangible, indescribable alteration which she felt in every nerve, with every heartbeat, from which she could no more turn her thoughts, than she could keep her eye from seeing the objects before, or her ears from hearing the sounds around them? Thenceforth she had been beset by the kind of confusion that comes of trying to listen to two sounds at once, or rather of trying to hear the one, and to shut out the other, which will not be excluded. Then the splendours of art and the associations of history, the beauty of the fair city, the novelty of society and movement, all lost their attraction for her, and there stole over her and took possession of her great dread and weariness. She strove against them, she especially strove to conceal any of their symptoms from Dunstan, following out the programme of each day as he arranged it with unquestioning acquiescence, but losing day by day all interest in the scene around her, and gradually coming to have a great longing to be back again at Bevis, and a great shrinking from the idea of London. When they should be at Bevis, among all the familiar objects, in the scene of their daily duties, she must

surely come to understand him better, and learn how to please him; she would be undisturbed there in that study. As if she ever ceased from it! So that, when Dunstan told her he did not care for going up to London until near the end of the season, she was perfectly well pleased, and would have given much to tell him that she should never wish for anything other—better there could not be—than to remain always at Bevis with him. She did not tell him so, however; she had never gotten into the way of saying out what there was of this kind in her heart to him; and that which had been strange and difficult before, the inexplicable something that inspired her questions soon rendered impossible.

There was coming to Janet, through the strange and secret source of her inexplicable suffering, a fault from which she had hitherto been singularly free—the fault of self-consciousness. A blight, not to be seen or felt save by herself alone, had fallen upon her, and she sought in herself for its origin, until she became occupied with herself to a degree which would have been impossible to the Janet of the past, the Janet whose heart, though irrevocably given away in the sense of a woman's abiding love, was free from self, and full of service, and her spirit chainless and lofty. A change was passing upon these qualities of her fine nature; the shadow of the eclipse of her faith and hope. She was constantly thinking about her own looks, her own dress, her own manners, the effect she produced, and the attitude of her husband's mind towards her. Janet, who had been accustomed to the knowledge that her face was fair, just as she had been accustomed to the knowledge that twenty-four hours made the day and night, but to concern herself no more about the one abstract fact than the other, took to thinking about her looks. She would often gaze wistfully into the glass, comparing the face that looked back at her to-day with that which she had seen yesterday, and dreading lest the answer to the haunting question might be found in the reflection there. She was altogether wrong in that surmise; her husband still admired her quite as much as when her beauty had first taken him by surprise; more, indeed, perhaps, now that it was fittingly adorned with rich attire. Only he did not think about her fair face when he was looking at it.

Janet, who had never given a thought to her personal adornment, beyond the intuitive regard to neatness and appropriateness that is inseparable from the habits of a

gentlewoman, took to thinking about clothes. She studied the dress of other women, she observed the vagaries of fashion, she wondered whether it could be that she offended her husband's fastidious taste by making unconscious blunders in an art of which she was so ignorant. She was again altogether wrong in that surmise; she had good taste in dress, and Dunstan recognised it. Only he did not think about her dress when he saw it, and when she again wore a gown or a jewel because he once had noticed it, he did not see that she was wearing the gown or the jewel.

Janet, to whom a serene unembarrassed bearing, as free from affectation as it was free from boldness, was as natural as breathing, began to think about her manners! Had something awkward in her, something unlike the ways and the tone of the "world" in which he had always lived, a *gaucherie* betraying her want of skill and custom, which had not been apparent in the quiet life from which he had taken her, annoyed her husband, chilled and humiliated him, against his will, perhaps hardly with his knowledge. Janet had read of such things, such dreadful things, in novels, limited as her acquaintance with fiction was; and in her secret soul she regarded herself, in comparison with Dunstan, as "the beggar maid" in comparison with the king who married her; for on the side on which Janet was humble, her humility was thorough. There was a side on which she was proud, with a thoroughness of pride in which there might be terrible power for evil; but she knew nothing of that in herself when she took to studying herself, and, among other baseless fancies, pondered that one, whether her manners were not unconsciously provincial and distressing to Dunstan. And, again, in that surmise she was altogether wrong. Her frankness, her gentleness, and her quick intelligence were all blended and expressed in Janet's "ways," and her husband had never found a fault with her, although she was undeniably a distinct personage; although

The fashion of her gracefulness was not a followed rule.

It would have ceased to be gracefulness had she been able to make up her mind which was the "style" most likely to be admired by Dunstan among the varieties of "style" which her sojourn in Paris enabled her to observe, and set about imitating it. He might have noticed such an imitation, but, also, he might not, for he did not notice her "ways;" he had not

observed that she had gained in aplomb by her intercourse with the world, without losing in sweetness and simplicity; he marked no change in her. He did not love her; she did not strongly interest him. He knew she was handsome and good; he would always behave well to her, and take care she should have everything she wanted; she was all he could wish for as a wife except the only woman he did wish for; that, however, was not her fault, nor his, but the fault of Fate; and sometimes he did not mind it very much, while at others he wished he was dead.

To the outer world not the smallest indication of the state of feeling of either the one or the other was given; the surface of these two lives was perfectly smooth and sunny. And as for the question that haunted Janet, what was it but "a sentimental grievance" after all; and we know that a sentimental grievance, though it may divide nation against nation for successive centuries, and condemn races to comparative poverty and obscurity, is not worthy of consideration by hard headed and practical people.

To the two persons who really knew her well, and whose interest in her went far beyond that of the people who saw everything at Bevis in the rosiest of rose-colour—to Mrs. Cathcart and Amabel Ainslie—there was something not quite satisfactory about Janet's looks and ways. The vicar's impression was confirmed by the observation of his wife; the expression of Janet's countenance was changed; and she looked, now absent and again anxious, as she had never looked in the old time. Very likely it was the responsibility of her new position, Mrs. Cathcart thought, knowing that Janet was not one to take anything of the kind lightly, and feeling that she herself should genuinely hate a big place and a large establishment; but, whatever might be the cause of it, the alteration was there, unmistakable by anybody who knew Janet so well as she did. But that Janet's relations with her husband were anything but perfect, never occurred to Mrs. Cathcart. It could not, indeed, have occurred to anyone, for Captain Dunstan's demeanour to his wife was just the same as it had been during their brief engagement, and who was to guess that they had so little to say when they were left to themselves? Mrs. Cathcart was quite vexed with Janet's calm and indifferent way of answering her questions about Paris; she hoped it could not be possible that Janet was getting a little

spoilt, and inclined to what she might suppose to be the fine-ladyism of indifference to scenes and objects which must have been surprising and delightful to her inexperience. But even her apathy in regard to the wonders and delights of Paris did not strike Mrs. Cathcart so unpleasantly as her absent-mindedness when things of nearer interest and import were in question; she actually seemed like a person trying to listen to two speakers at once when the vicar was telling her about the new arrangements for the choir practising, and the vicar's wife had the properest sense of the laches involved in any inattention to the vicar.

Amabel Ainslie had seen the change in Janet as quickly as Mrs. Cathcart saw it, but she viewed it differently, and thought over it with a strange feeling of apprehension. Janet had not said one word to her of anything but content, and Amabel felt certain that she never would; but she had been vague with her also, and Amabel unhesitatingly assured herself that Janet was not happy.

"It is his fault," she said to herself; "it is his fault. I cannot guess, and I shall never know from her, but there is something wrong. No one but he could make her unhappy, now that she is his wife; her worship of him has that in it that no one else in the world can do her real good or harm. It is he! But what can it be? I cannot but guess and wonder. He seems, he is, so nice—a little too perfectly polite for my fancy, but then that is a matter of fancy, and very few people would agree with me—but he does not know much about her tastes and ideas, that is pretty plain. He looked so strange when I asked him what he thought of her songs—I don't believe he knew she ever composed one! Ah! Janet, Janet, I hope you have not married the wrong man; but I fear that is what it all means."

On the joyful occasion of the visit of the old ladies from Bury House to Bevis, where they arrived in the smartest carriage that Mr. Jones of the Bell Inn could turn out, Janet felt more nearly happy than she had been able to persuade herself that she was for some time. For it had come to that, she had to persuade herself; she had to silence the haunting voice by a strong effort of her will. What had become of the golden radiance that had shone all around her; where was the dream-world of bliss? The radiance had faded, the dreamworld had vanished, quite noise-



lessly, with no shock, no threat, but only the lightless void remained after the one, the chill of awakening after the other. On that day, however, it was almost as if the former glow, the old vision, were there again, for Janet could not but see that her husband was thoroughly pleased, and that he exerted himself to please. How kind, courteous, and attentive he was to the Misses Sandilands; how ready to echo all their delighted comments on Janet's good looks; how quick to prevent her being embarrassed by their eager and unsuspecting enquiries respecting Sir Wilfrid Esdaile; how ready to assist her in showing them the house and gardens; how kindly interested in all they had to tell of their nephew and his prospects. After all, this could only be for her, only a proof of his love for her, leading him to be careful for those who had befriended her. She would try to remember this, to hold it in her mind when the spectre rose and the voice haunted; to remember, above all, that he had chosen her, without a single advantage of any kind to tempt him to any motive except love. No, she must be mistaken; some dreadful temptation was at work within her. Thus Janet pleaded her own cause with her own self, while the old ladies were walking, in wondering admiration, through the long line of succession-houses, or surveying the beautiful prospect from the terrace, or giving Mrs. Manners infinite credit for the preservation in which the venerable furniture was kept, or admiring the fitting-up of Janet's rooms. The piano and the books that were Mrs. Drummond's gift had been sent back to Bevis from Bury House, and now occupied their former places. Wider experience and more fastidious taste than those of the old ladies might have pronounced Janet's home beautiful, and all that could be desired.

"You will let Julia come to us soon, will you not?" Janet asked Miss Susan, when the visit was drawing to a close. "You know she disappointed me before, and she must make it up to me now."

"As soon as you like, my dear Janet," was Miss Susan's reply. "We shall be so glad that she should have so great a pleasure; and, indeed, she must want some pleasant society, some happy faces to raise her spirits, after the painful scenes she has gone through."

"True. I have not heard particulars, but it must have been very trying for Julia."

"Of course you have not heard particulars, my dear; I should have been

much surprised had Julia distressed you by telling you all that sad story, at a time when, if there ever can be such a time in the life of human beings liable to death and sorrow, the remembrance of them ought to be put away. And I am not going to talk to you about it now, or to let you think about it."

"She was very young, and very happy," said Janet, not heeding Miss Susan's protest, "and it all came to an end in a moment. How dreadful!"

"Not all, my dear. We must not say all. It is a terrible bereavement, but poor Mrs. Thornton has many blessings left."

"Blessings! and her husband gone! What can be blessings to her without him?"

"Parents and friends," said Miss Susan seriously; "health, youth, fortune; and then, you know, or perhaps you may not have heard, she has her child to look forward to—a great consolation, and a tie to life, however great her trouble."

"Do you think so?" said Janet, but absently, almost as if she were talking to herself. "I cannot imagine there being any consolation for such a loss; I cannot believe that there could be any tie to life when that one is broken which must be all or nothing."

With a look of great tenderness in her sweet old face, Miss Susan laid her shrivelled palm on Janet's soft white hand, as she said in a low voice:

"It is just like you to feel like that; but you are only a wife as yet, my dear."

Captain Dunstan had been talking to the elder sister while these sentences were exchanged between Janet and Miss Susan, but Janet, raising her eyes as the last was spoken, saw in his face a look of strange distress and disturbance which set her heart beating fast and heavily, with the vague dread that she had displeased him. The look passed in a moment, but it had stayed long enough to overcast all the calm and gladness that she had been feeling. Presently the old ladies drove away in state, perfectly happy, and much delighted with their visit; and Janet and her husband, who had accompanied them to the carriage, returned into the house. She was making up her mind to ask him how she had offended him, whether it was the sentiment she had expressed, or the fact of her uttering it—a fault, it might be, in the world's code of manners—which had disturbed him, when he took up his hat,

and said to her with the utmost ease, as if nothing whatever had occurred to trouble him:

"I have to speak to the vicar on some business, and I shall just catch him if I go now."

The spectre rose more plainly than ever before Janet, the haunting voice pressed its question with more intolerable iteration. What was it in her that was parting them, and was he resolved that she should not ask him? But Janet had not offended Dunstan; he had paid no heed to what she said; the disturbance in his face had been caused by no words of hers; and now, as he walked in the direction of the Vicarage, but not with any purpose of seeing the vicar, he was not thinking of her at all. He had spoken with even unusual gentleness just because he was not, just because she did not matter to him; just because, when he too was beset with a spectre, and when a haunting voice most pertinaciously whispered, "Too late!" he made a scrupulous point, in the futile honourableness of his uninstructed conscience, of repeating to himself: "It is no fault of hers."

On the day after Julia Carmichael's arrival at Bevis on her promised visit, she and Janet went to the Vicarage; but Janet only remained with Mrs. Cathcart, Julia returning to the house to write her letters. That day Janet was indisputably not looking well, and she did not deny that she had been feeling ill. "At least, not exactly ill, but strange," she explained; "what Edward calls 'moped' and therefore I am especially glad Julia has come; she is so pleasant and amusing." Mrs. Cathcart had an afternoon engagement which made it impossible for her to walk home with Janet, and she took leave of her at the little gate in the park wall, of which each possessed a key. Mrs. Cathcart lingered for a few minutes on her own side of the gate, watching the tall slender figure moving onward under the branches of the great elms, and noting, as she had often noted before, its grace and steadiness. When she had reached a point in the avenue which they called the "dip," Janet turned, waved her handkerchief in farewell, and vanished. Then Mrs. Cathcart returned to the house, thinking that she wished Janet were quite well, and not

"moped," that she hoped that nice Julia would do her good, and that it would be a great pity if delicate health should come to mar the perfection of the arrangement for which Mrs. Drummmond had so dexterously schemed by securing the residence of her heir at his estate for those three important months. And then she dropped that thread of thought, never to resume it in all her life again.

Janet walked on under the branches of the great elms, more and more slowly as she neared the upper end of the stately avenue where the shrubberies commenced, by passing through a portion of which she could gain a small flight of steps leading to the stone terrace. This was the shortest way to the house, and she was glad it was not longer, for there was a strange distressing sense of exhaustion over her, and her sight was dim. Once or twice her steps grew uncertain, and she felt as she so well remembered to have felt that day, in the grounds at The Chantry, when Sir Wilfrid Esdaile told her the story it so much grieved her to hear. She got through the shrubbery, hardly conscious of her movements, ascended the little flight of steps, and found herself on the terrace, within a few yards of the windows of the library, which were open. A garden bench was set against the wall of the house close beside the window nearest to her; in front of it paced Argus, the peacock, "high and disposedly." She saw a flash of colour as the beautiful tame bird's tail swept her dress, then saw no more, put her hand out, caught hold of the bench, and sank down upon it, quite senseless.

When Janet recovered consciousness, and the first utter vagueness after a swoon passed off, to be succeeded by the absolute weakness that holds the whole body fettered, she remained, half sitting, half lying, but perfectly motionless. She could not speak, she could not lift her head or raise her eyelids. One arm hung over the rail of the bench and so kept her balanced; she tried to move the other, but she could not. Presently the sound of voices came to her ears, voices distinct, and close to her. Two persons, who must have been within two or three feet of her, and just inside the window-sill, were talking in earnest tones. They were Julia and Dunstan; and Janet, motionless, speechless, spellbound, heard every word they said.

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